(c) Government is in constant dialogue with SAIL and is periodically reviewing its performance with a view to increasing its competitiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, to check losses and improve the financial health of SAIL, the Company has drawn up a comprehensive financial and business restructuring plan.

A comprehensive turnaround proposal for revival of the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (Viskhapatnam Steel Plant) has been drawn up by the Company.

Government provides an appropriate policy regime to encourage adoption of modern cost effective technologies in the steel plants in the country. Initiatives/steps for improving the performance of the steel plants in the private sector have to come from the entrepreneurs/management themselves.

Exporters' Woes for Speed Money

†*219. SHRI BARJINDER SINGH HAMDARD:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE & INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Economic Times, dated 13th November, 1999 under the caption "Speed Money adds to Exporters' Woes: W.B.";

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the Indian exporters' expenditure at the ports of the country is higher than the expenditure incurred by foreign exporters at the posts of their countries;

(c) if so, the facts in this regard;

(d) the reason for this excess expenditure and whether Government have explored the possibilities of minimising these expenses; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The Government has come across such a news item. The Government is not aware of any speed money charges being paid by the exporters. However, the Government has

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

been receiving representations from various trade bodies on the issue of higher cost of Indian exports. Some of the reasons are high sea freight and transportation costs, Terminal Handling Charges (THCs), Container Detention Charges and the transhipment costs involved in transhipping the Indian cargo etc.

(d) and (e) The Government is concious of the high costs and various measures have been taken to simplify the procedures, reduce the dwell time, rationalise handling costs and bring greater efficiency at ports and other handling points. Regulatory authority *i.e.* Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) is already in place to regulate the charges levied by the Port Trusts. Steps are being taken to augment the port facilities through mechanisation which would result in faster movement of the cargo and reduced costs. Simplification and rationalisation of procedures has also been undertaken to encourage coastal shipping with a view to promote development of JNP as hub port and to avoid transhipment costs. Special attention has also been accorded to implement the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) at the Ports to cut down multiplicity of documents. The Department of Revenue has taken measures to facilitate faster movement and clearance of goods at ports. Important measures, *inter-alia* include simplification of transhipment rules, coastal shipping, bonded trucking, rational measures for speedy clearance of export-import goods and extended coverage of different export related schemes at vatious ports of registration.

Amount Spent on Delhi Metro Service Scheme

†*220. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of works completed so far under Delhi Metro Service Scheme and the amount spent thereon?

(b) the kilometerage and details of places where railway lines are proposed to be laid under the scheme; and

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† Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.